



Althéra® & Alfamino®
parents' guide

to weaning an infant with cows' milk allergy

foreword

Weaning is an exciting time for you and your baby, as you watch your little one progress from a diet of breast milk/formula milk feeds to eating family meals.

However, weaning can also be challenging with so many questions to be answered;

What foods
to give?

When to
introduce
them?

How to
introduce them?

If your infant has a milk allergy, the challenges can seem bigger as you may be worried about introducing new foods.

Don't worry help is at hand!

This practical handbook is intended as a step-by-step guide to weaning a child with milk allergy.

It has been written with input from experienced paediatric dietitians (and mothers!), **Joe Price, Heidi Ball** and **Angharad Banner**.

Important note; Every child is different. This guide is not intended to replace the advice of healthcare professionals. If in doubt, consult your child's Health Visitor, doctor or dietitian.

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weaning

what's it all about?

From birth to 6 months, breast milk (or formula*) will provide a complete source of energy and all the other nutrients your baby needs.

Weaning is the process of switching your child from a breast milk or formula only diet to a mixed solid food diet. It is sometimes called complementary feeding

Although breast milk or formula remains very important throughout early childhood, solids are required from 6 months to complement the breast milk or formula as your baby's requirements for nutrients are increasing. A child who is only taking breast milk or formula may struggle to meet their requirements for key nutrients such as iron.

A mixed diet including meat/pulses, cereals and starchy vegetables provides iron, protein and calories.



did you know?

Weaning is not just about food and nutrition, however:

- Weaning helps your baby experience new tastes and textures at a time when they are more receptive
- Weaning helps your baby learn to swallow food safely
- Learning to chew and swallow helps develop your baby's speech muscles
- Weaning can play a part in developing your baby's social interactions as they become more involved in family meals

***Important notice:** Breastmilk is best for babies, and the Department of Health recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding alongside the introduction of weaning foods.

when to wean

The introduction of solid food to infants in addition to breast milk or infant formula provides a range of important nutrients.

The government and expert scientific groups (ESPGHAN) recommend that although breast milk and formula can provide all the nutrition an infant needs up to the age of 6 months, solid (weaning foods) should be introduced at 6 months, but the exact timing will depend on the individual infant and family. Weaning before 17 weeks is not recommended.

Signs that your baby may be ready for weaning:

- Sucking their fist or putting objects in their mouth
- Co-ordinate their eyes, mouth and hand
- Able to swallow
- Sitting upright with minimal support

If you think your baby may be ready but he/she is only showing one or two signs, ask your Health Visitor for advice.

General weaning advice – for everyone!

- Always stay with your baby when they are eating
- Avoid hard foods such as raw vegetable sticks, small round foods like grapes, hard sweets and whole nuts
- Try not to add salt and sugar to food
- Adult foods contain a lot of salt or sugar (e.g. stock cubes, baked beans, tinned soups) so try to avoid when weaning
- Honey shouldn't be given under one year of age as it may contain bacteria or fungal spores which can make your baby very ill
- Check fish for bones and ensure all bones are removed before feeding to baby
- Simple hygiene is key, always make sure you wash your hands before preparing baby's food
- Check food is at a suitable temperature before serving to baby



why milk is still important

Why is milk an important part of my baby's diet?

An infant will drink less breast milk/formula after the age of 6 months as you start to introduce solid foods. However, breast or formula milk remains an important food in early childhood.

When your baby is on a milk-free diet, using the special formula milk (Althera® or Alfamino®) for mixing and in recipes can help improve intake of calcium and calories.

Breastfeeding and weaning.

If you are breast feeding you should continue to do so. (A very small number of babies will react to traces of cows' milk protein from mother's diet coming through in breast milk. You may be advised to follow a milk-free diet but this should be done only with advice from a dietitian to make sure you are taking adequate nutrition.)

Getting your baby to take the new formula.

If your baby is having infant milk formula with or without any breast milk, your healthcare professional will recommend that you stop the usual formula your baby is taking immediately and change straight over to your new specialist formula. This will help your baby's symptoms.

In some circumstances you may be able to gradually swap your baby onto the new formula milk by mixing the specialist formula and their old milk formula together and gradually increasing the proportion of the milk-free feed.

This should only be done if your doctor or dietitian has advised you to do so.

What about vitamins?

The Department of Health recommends giving vitamins to babies from 6 months of age unless they are drinking more than 500ml of formula per day.

A supplement containing vitamins A, C and D should continue until your child is 5 years old.

good fun at mealtimes!

This is a new experience for both of you, so enjoy it and allow your baby to explore foods with their fingers and mouth.

As soon as your baby can sit up, supporting their own head, introduce a high chair and place the food in front of them.

- Provide a soft, shallow plastic spoon for your baby to play with
- Let your baby touch and play with the foods

Always try to include your baby in:

- Family mealtimes
- Eating with others
- Eating with other children - this will help develop good eating habits and make mealtimes more relaxed



Don't worry if your baby doesn't seem keen, it can sometimes take a few attempts and this is normal



In the kitchen



A hand held blender or liquidiser is inexpensive and can make puréed or mashed foods very quickly.

At the table



Have a selection of bibs ready and a plastic sheet to cover the floor.



You will also need a plastic bowl, and 2 soft, plastic shallow baby spoons (one for you and one for your baby!)

During mealtimes: you and your baby



Always stay with your child when they are feeding.



Ignore pulling faces and throwing food (negative behaviour) and reinforce tasting and eating, touching and picking up food (positive behaviour). Give lots of praise and encouraging smiles.



Avoid wiping your baby and the tray continually – it will distract your baby and make the meal less relaxed.



Timing is of the essence

- A tired baby will probably not want to try new foods
- Your baby should be hungry enough to encourage them to try new foods but not too hungry or they will want the 'quick fix' of a formula or breast milk feed
- If your baby is so hungry that they do not want to try any weaning foods, let them have a small amount of breast milk or their specialist formula (e.g. Althéra® or Alfamino®) first and then offer the solids



Never rush the meal but don't prolong it either, about 15-30 minutes should be enough.



Don't force feed, let your baby decide when they've had enough and stop the meal. Don't worry if baby doesn't take to the weaning on the first attempt, every baby is different and it may take a few tries which is normal. Appreciate your baby may eat more some days than others and can have several days of lower intake when teething.

specific advice for a baby with milk allergy

Introducing other foods

This can seem quite challenging and there are questions around the introduction of other allergenic foods such as wheat, soya, egg, fish, nuts etc. There is no evidence that delaying the introduction of these foods will prevent the development of allergies, in fact evidence is building that EARLY rather than delayed introduction may be beneficial. So, even though your baby may have an allergy to milk, you should aim to introduce a variety of different foods and flavours into the weaning diet, avoiding milk of course.

On page 46 you can make a note of when you have introduced new foods and whether your baby enjoyed them.



However if your child has eczema or has had a reaction to another food other than milk, you may be advised to introduce these higher allergenic foods in only a small quantity for the first couple of times and discuss any concerns with your health visitor or dietitian.



quick reference guide - weaning stages

STAGE 1 starting off

What texture?

- Smooth purée
- Cooked and soft foods can be made into a puree by passing them through a sieve or by a hand blender or liquidiser

How much?

- Begin with 1-2 teaspoons, gradually increasing the amount according to your baby's appetite
- Start with a milk-free baby rice (check the label) mixed with vegetable/fruit puree or breast milk/Althera®/Alfamino® formula
- Once your baby is established on vegetables and fruit you can begin to introduce puréed meat, fish or lentils

STAGE 2 moving on

What texture?

- Gradually move onto mashed and lumpier foods which encourage your child to chew
- Start to introduce finger foods such as soft cooked vegetable (e.g. boiled carrot/parsnip), soft toast and milk-free margarine, ricecakes, baby corn puffs or soft fruit (e.g. banana)

How Much?

- Servings can still be small
- Include meat, fish or pulses (including lentils, peas or beans) in at least 1 meal per day
- Try to offer 2-3 servings of starchy foods per day and 2 servings of vegetables and fruit

Your healthcare professional will help you to understand where your baby is on their journey

STAGE 3 family meals

What texture?

- Continue with mashed food aiming to move onto more chopped up foods
- Encourage finger foods
- Encourage your child to feed themselves

How Much?

- At least one small serving of meat, fish or pulses (including peas, beans and lentils)
- 3-4 small servings of starchy foods and 3-4 small servings of fruit and vegetables
- Look at what you are cooking for the family and see if it can be adapted for your child e.g. a milk-free spaghetti bolognese or shepherds pie



checking labels

Labels and especially the ingredients list should always be checked. Ingredients may change without you knowing it!



Prepacked food sold in the UK and EU must show allergens in the ingredients – this includes cows' milk. If a food or packet contains milk it will clearly say the word MILK which has to be emphasised such as in bold type, underlined etc. in the list of ingredients.



Foods sold loose such as in bakeries, delis and restaurants/ takeaways must now have ingredient information available on request (either written or verbal), so always remember to ask if a food contains milk (and avoid if no information can be given).

If a food does not clearly state the ingredients it may be best avoided. If you require further information about the ingredients, contact the manufacturer's customer service department. Outside of the EU, you will need to check for milk on the ingredients list.



Always check labels on branded manufactured foods, even if recommended in these recipes. We cannot control any recipe changes made by other manufacturers.

recipes

If you are travelling outside of the EU, you will need to check for milk on the ingredients list of any foods you purchase. Milk can be present in many forms and you will need to check for the following:

- Milk powder/skimmed milk powder
- Milk drinks /malted milk drinks
- All types of cheese/cheese powder
- Butter
- Margarine/low fat spread - unless it specifically states it is milk-free
- Yoghurt/quark/fromage frais
- Cream/sour cream
- Casein/caseinates/sodium caseinates/ hydrolysed casein
- Milk solids
- Non-fat milk
- Whey
- Whey syrup sweetener
- Milk sugar solids
- Lactose - your dietitian can advise if lactose needs to be avoided

(non-exhaustive list)

The following recipes will help you to prepare milk-free meals for your child. The recipes in this guide all contain specialist formulas Althéra® or Alfamino® formula in everyday family foods, such as white sauce used for pasta and fish. Incorporating your milk-free formula into recipes will help improve the intake of calcium and calories which is often lacking in a diet which contains no cows' milk.

Other formula milks can be used in place of Althéra® or Alfamino® if recommended by your Doctor or Dietitian.

As you gain confidence you may be able to adapt family meals to make them suitable for your child. There are many family meals which are already milk-free such as a traditional Sunday roast (without the Yorkshires!) and chilli con carne so it is often possible to prepare a meal that all the family can eat and enjoy.

If you choose to freeze extra portions, ensure the food is defrosted properly, fully reheated and then stir in the Althéra® or Alfamino®





vegetable purées

Pea and potato purée

(makes approximately 4-6 portions of purée)

2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into small pieces

100g frozen peas

8 scoops specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

Boil the potatoes until soft in unsalted water then drain. Boil the peas until soft in unsalted water then drain. Blend the vegetables together until smooth.

Mix in the specialist formula in the blender or with a spoon.

Add a little boiled water if too thick.

Sweet potato and parsnip purée

(makes approximately 4-6 portions of purée)

1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into small pieces

1 medium parsnip, peeled and cut into small pieces

8 scoops specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

Boil the sweet potato and parsnip until soft in unsalted water then drain. Blend the vegetables together until smooth, and then stir in specialist formula.

Add a little boiled water if too thick.

variations

- Swede and carrot
- Butternut squash and parsnip
- Courgette and potato
- Broccoli and sweet potato
- Sweet potato and cauliflower
- Carrot and potato





fruit purées

Apple and pear purée

(makes approximately 4-6 portions of purée)

2 dessert apples, peeled and cut into small pieces

1 pear, peeled and cut into small pieces

8 scoops of specialist formula
(Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

Cut the fruit into small pieces and cook gently with a little water over a low heat until all the fruit is soft. Drain any excess water then blend to a smooth purée. Add the specialist formula and stir well.



Banana Mash

2 bananas

60 ml of pre-made specialist formula
(Althéra®/Alfamino®)

(you can add 30ml of water if it is too thick)

Instructions

Chop the bananas into small chunks and blend to a smooth purée, then stir in the pre-made specialist formula.





breakfast

Breakfast Porridge

(makes 2 portions)

1 tbsp. porridge oats

90ml water

4 scoops specialist formula
(Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

In a saucepan or microwave add the porridge and water and bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, then take off the heat and mix in the specialist formula.

variations

- Add puréed fruit to flavour





dessert

Custard

(makes 4 portions)

1 tbsp. of milk-free custard powder

200ml specialist formula (180ml water and 6 scoops Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

Mix custard powder with 50ml of specialist formula mix to make a paste. Then, gently heat the remaining specialist formula mixture in a pan.

Remove from the heat and slowly add the custard mixture stirring continuously.

Return to the heat and heat until thickened.



variations

- Add puréed fruit to flavour



stage 2

Introducing finger foods to baby

Finger foods are pieces of food that your baby can easily hold.

Cut into pieces the size of an adult finger.

Start with soft foods and gradually progress onto harder finger foods.

Suggestions:

- Soft cooked pasta – twirls, macaroni etc
- Sticks of steamed vegetable e.g. carrot, parsnip, courgette, sweet potato, broccoli
- Fruit sticks cut into long thin pieces e.g. ripe banana, pear, avocado, melon
- Rice cakes, breadsticks
- Fingers of toast, pitta bread spread with milk-free margarine etc (always check labels on breads as they may use milk products when baking)



Eat a rainbow! Variety is important as different coloured fruit and vegetables contain their own combination of vitamins and minerals.



white sauce

1tbsp milk-free margarine

1tbsp plain flour

160ml specialist formula (150ml water and 5 scoops Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Instructions

Melt the milk-free margarine in a pan, then add the flour and stir until a paste has formed. Then take off the heat and slowly mix in the specialist formula mixture, put back on the heat and stir until thickened. Can be made on the hob or in the microwave whisking regularly.

(If sauce still appears thin, it will thicken on cooling).

tips

For gluten-free sauce, use cornflour to thicken instead of flour as follows;

Mix the cornflour with a little of the cold specialist formula to make a smooth paste. Add the milk-free margarine and remaining specialist formula and place on the heat and stir continuously until the sauce boils and thickens. If using a microwave, stir every 30 seconds.

This sauce can be frozen in individual portions (refer to general freezing comment on page 13).

variations

- For a cheese sauce add 50g grated milk-free cheese and put back on the hob to melt, stirring continuously
- For a tomato sauce add 1 tsp. of tomato purée and a pinch of dried mixed herbs or basil (optional)



fish in herb sauce

(makes 2-3 portions)

150g boneless white fish or salmon
(fresh or frozen)

Specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)
white sauce
(see recipe on page 25)

1tbs fresh parsley finely chopped for
white fish or dried tarragon for salmon

Instructions

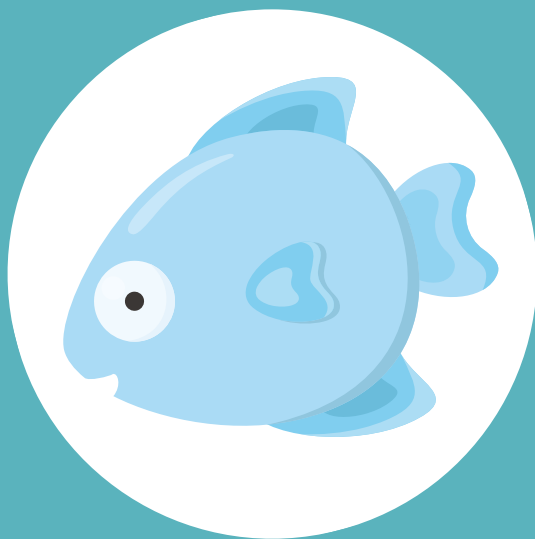
Steam or microwave the fish, or alternatively poach it in a little specialist formula, until soft and cooked through (approximately 5 minutes).

Make up the specialist formula sauce, then add the parsley or tarragon.

Pour onto the fish or flake the fish into the sauce.

Serve with mashed potato and vegetables.

Always check for bones before serving.





creamy leeks

(makes 2-3 portions)

1 leek, finely sliced

Specialist formula (Althéra®/
Alfamino®) white sauce
(see recipe on page 25)

50g hard milk-free cheese,
grated

Instructions

Slice the leeks and boil or steam until soft.

Make the specialist formula white sauce and stir in the drained leeks.

Sprinkle with grated milk-free cheese and grill until golden brown.

Good to know:

Leeks and Courgettes contain iron and calcium

variations

- Try using courgettes or potatoes instead of leeks
- Serve as a vegetable side-dish or as a main course



macaroni cheese

A good finger food from 8 months.

(makes 2-3 portions)

50g dried macaroni

Specialist formula Althéra®/Alfamino®
milk-free cheese sauce (see recipe
variation on page 25)

50g of milk-free cheese, grated

Instructions

Cook the macaroni following the pack instructions until soft then drain.

Meanwhile make the specialist formula cheese sauce.

Mix together the sauce and macaroni

Top with more milk-free cheese and grill.

tips

Use gluten- or wheat-free pasta if you need a gluten- or wheat-free version.

variations

- Add cooked veg to this recipe such as broccoli or leeks



tuna and sweetcorn pasta with tomato sauce

A good finger food from 8 months.

(makes 3-4 portions)

50g dried pasta

160g tinned tuna

Specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)
tomato sauce (see tomato sauce recipe
and recipe variations on page 25)

4 tbsp. sweetcorn and peas – frozen or
tinned

Instructions

Cook the pasta following the pack instructions until soft then drain.

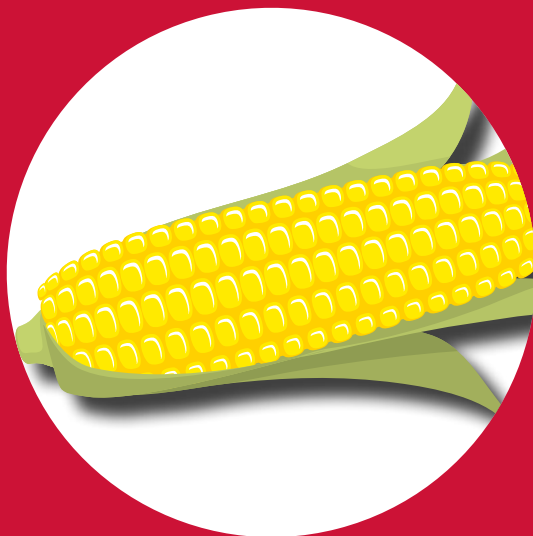
In the meantime, make the specialist formula tomato sauce.

Drain the pasta and add the cooked, softened sweetcorn, peas and drained tuna, then stir.

Pour over the sauce and fold into the pasta.

variations

- Add other cooked vegetables such as diced carrots, chopped broccoli or leeks or mixed vegetables (fresh or frozen)
- Use salmon (free of bones) or cooked chicken or ham instead of tuna (check any pre-cooked meat is milk-free)





chicken casserole

(makes 3-4 portions)

1 tbsp. vegetable oil

200g chicken, diced

1 clove crushed garlic

1 onion, chopped

200g chopped mixed vegetables
(e.g. carrot, sweet potato, parsnip)

2 tbsp. tomato purée

1 tbsp. dried mixed herbs

260ml specialist formula (240ml water
and 8 scoops of Althéra®/Alfamino®)

2 tsp. cornflour

Instructions

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4).

Heat oil in a saucepan, add chicken and cook until browned.

Add garlic and onion, cook until soft.

Add chopped vegetables and stir.

Add tomato purée and herbs.

Mix cornflour with some of the water to make a smooth paste, add the rest of the water and 8 scoops specialist formula and stir into the saucepan with the chicken mixture.

Transfer to a casserole dish and cook in oven for 1 hour.

Serve with mashed potato or rice.

variations

- Vary the vegetables used: swede, butternut squash, leeks
- For a vegetarian version try adding some tinned beans, such as butter beans, borlotti or red kidney beans (avoid beans in salted water, or rinse them well)
- Use beef or pork or lamb instead of chicken



sweet potato cakes

(makes 8-10 cakes)

2 sweet potatoes, chopped into small pieces

1 tbsp. tahini

1 x 400g tinned chick peas

2 tbsp. tomato puree

60ml water and 3 scoops of specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)

½ tsp. cumin

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 tbsp. fresh coriander, finely chopped

Good to know:

Did you know that chick peas are a good source of protein and calcium?

Also a good way to introduce seeds into the diet as Tahini contains sesame.

Instructions

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas mark 7.

Boil the sweet potatoes until soft and drain.

Mash the chick peas until slightly squashed.

Add the sweet potato and the rest of the ingredients to the mashed chick peas and stir thoroughly.

Form small patties in your hand and place on a greased baking tray.

Cook for 20 mins until slightly brown and firm to the touch.



lentil ragu

(makes 6-8 portions)

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely crushed
- 100g red split lentils
- 1 tsp. mixed herbs
- 2 tbsp. tomato puree
- 1 x 400g tinned chopped tomatoes
- 200ml specialist formula (180ml water and 6 scoops of Althéra®/Alfamino®)

Good to know:

Lentils are a good source of fibre.

Instructions

Heat the oil on the hob in a non-stick saucepan and add the chopped onion. Cook for 2-3 minutes until soft and slightly brown.

Add the chopped carrot, pepper and garlic and cook for 5 minutes.

Add the lentils and mixed herbs and stir.

Add the tomato puree, tinned tomatoes and specialist formula mixture and stir.

Cook on a medium heat for about 30 minutes or until the vegetables are soft, ensuring it is boiling gently.

Serve with pasta or mashed potato.



dessert

chocolate pear pudding

(makes 6-8 portions)

100g milk-free margarine

100g soft brown sugar

100g self-raising flour

2 medium eggs

180ml water and 6 scoops of specialist formula (Althéra®/Alfamino®)

25g cocoa powder

1 x 420g tin of pear halves in fruit juice, drained and chopped



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.

Beat the milk-free margarine and brown sugar together until slightly paler in colour.

Add the flour and eggs to the mixture and stir well.

Add the specialist formula and cocoa powder and mix until fully combined.

Place the chopped pear into a small greased ovenproof dish (9 inch x 7 inch) and top with the chocolate mixture.

Cook for 30 – 40 minutes until set in the middle and slightly cracked on the top.



dessert

coconut peach ice cream

1 x 400g tin of coconut milk

10 scoops specialist formula
(Althéra®/Alfamino®)

1 x 410g tin of peach slices in fruit juice



Instructions

Heat the coconut milk in a saucepan until nearly boiling and then remove from the heat.

Add the specialist formula and tinned peach slices and blend until smooth.

Pour into a 1 litre plastic container and leave to cool on the side for 30 minutes.

Put the mixture into the freezer for approximately 30 minutes.

Remove from the freezer and whisk using a hand blender.

Return to the freezer for another 30 minutes and repeat this step until all the mixture is frozen and looks like ice cream.



dessert milk jelly

4 cubes of Jelly*

60ml boiling water

60ml specialist formula (50ml water and
2 scoops powdered Althéra®/Alfamino®)



Instructions

Add the Jelly to a saucepan and pour in the boiling water, allow the jelly to melt while on a gentle heat.

Allow the jelly to cool slightly before adding the specialist formula mixture.

Place the jelly into moulds and refrigerate until set.

*We used strawberry jelly here but you can choose your favourite flavour

tips

You can buy different shaped jelly moulds to add fun to mealtimes!

There are many different flavoured Jellies available, strawberry and orange are very popular!

diary

Diary for tracking food introduction.

date/time offered

new food

amount eaten

likes and dislikes

weaning and recipe notes



weaning and recipe notes



Made available through your child's healthcare professional.

Important notice: Breastmilk is best for babies, and the Department of Health recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding alongside the introduction of weaning foods.

Althéra® and Alfamino® are foods for special medical purposes, strictly for use under medical supervision.

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